

# Office Hours Ceremony

**Set aside open time for employees and co-workers to interact with leaders, managers, consultants, or each other without worrying about interrupting or disturbing each other.**

## Purpose

To provide a specific open and safe time when people are free to ask questions, discuss issues, and raise concerns.

## Preparation

Clearly communicate to all potential participants the time when office hours are to be held and the protocol for reserving an appointment.

## Participants (roles)

Office Hour Holder, Participants

## Pattern

Open—Office Hour Holder announces office hours are open and for how long, and invites participants to sign up if there is anything they would like to discuss.

Execute—Office Hour Holder invites the person at the top of the list into a private office hours session. The Office Hour Holder invites the Participant to begin speaking by asking “What’s on your mind?”

The Participant and the Office Hour Holder engage in conversation as directed by the Participants answer to the Office Hour Holders open question.

As each Participant completes their conversation, the next Participant is invited into the office.

Close—The Office Hour Holders announce office hours are closed and reminds anyone remaining on the list when office hours will next be held.

## Product

A list of questions, issues, and concerns raised during the office hours and any action items for the Office Hour Holder.

## Tips

Have a sign-up board outside the office for people to sign their names in order. If doing

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office hours digitally or remotely use a shared document for the sign-up list. Then text, call, zoom or otherwise find the next Participant on the list when it is their turn.

Office Hours is an especially nice tool if you have specialists and consultants working part-time with the team.

When providing Office Hours as a consultant we frequently pair consultants so two people fulfil the role of Office Hour Holder.

The seven questions in the book *The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever* by Michael Bungay Stanier, are wonderful questions to use during office hours. The questions are:

1. What's on your mind?
2. And what else?
3. What's the real challenge here for you?
4. What do you want?
5. How can I help?
6. If you're saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?
7. What was most useful for you?

People with the following words in their titles may especially wish to consider offering office hours: President, Vice-President, Executive, Director, Manager, Project Manager, Consultant, Coach, Lead, Senior.

The Clean Language practice also has powerful questions to use in Office Hours. An introduction to Clean Language may be found in the book *From Contempt to Curiosity: Creating the Conditions for Groups to Collaborate Using Clean Language and Systemic Modelling* by Caitlin Walker.